

United States Air Force. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing him all of the best.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN HONDURAS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep concern about the steady deterioration of human rights in Honduras since the June 2009 coup d'état. In recent months, attacks against journalists; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) advocates; land rights activists and other vulnerable communities have increased. I want to draw particular attention to a few tragic deaths that occurred just this month: on May 1st, Santos Alberto Dominguez, a member of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations (COPINH), was murdered. On May 8th, Erick Martinez, a well-known LGBTI activist, was found dead in a gutter. And on May 9th, Alfredo Villatoro—a popular radio show host—was kidnapped on his way to work and has not been heard from since.

These deaths come amidst numerous reports of abuses committed by Honduran security forces. And yet the vast majority of these abuses as well as Mr. Dominguez and Mr. Martinez's deaths have yet to be investigated and prosecuted. I have repeatedly requested that all U.S. assistance to Honduran police and military forces be suspended as long as Honduran authorities fail to investigate and prosecute these abuses. It is a travesty that U.S. taxpayers dollars are bolstering abusive security forces.

But while the situation in Honduras continues to deteriorate, I am encouraged by the important work of Honduran human rights organizations. These groups are on the frontlines of justice, documenting human rights abuses and offering the support and legal representation that the Honduran state fails to provide. Yet these organizations are receiving threats of sexual violence—particularly targeted at female human rights workers—and death threats without any form of effective protection from the Honduran authorities. There has also been a troubling escalation of threats against international human rights accompaniers. All of these threats must be immediately investigated, and the individuals and groups that are behind them must be brought to justice.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to support human rights in Honduras. The people of Honduras deserve their rights. They deserve their freedoms. And they deserve peace. They have suffered too much. Justice cannot wait a moment longer.

THE COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 5326) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5326, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for FY 2013. While there have been several amendments that have improved the bill, including the increase in COPS funding, I still cannot support the measure in its current form.

One program that is particularly hard hit by this bill and is important for many of my constituents, and citizens across the country, is the Legal Services Corporation. The Legal Services Corporation is the largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans, and makes aid available to some 60 million people nationwide. Once again, the Republican majority is proposing to cut millions of dollars from its budget, and leave thousands of the poorest among us underserved just when they need help the most.

The mission of the Legal Services Corporation is to provide at-risk citizens like the elderly, veterans, and single mothers with legal assistance when they need help from a trained lawyer or paralegal. The people we are talking about helping are mothers trying to protect their children from an abusive spouse; senior citizens trying to prevent their homes from being foreclosed on; and veterans trying to secure the benefits they are entitled to.

The economic downturn and the collapse of the housing market left many of our families in greater need of legal aid than ever before. We must make sure that access to well-trained legal assistance is not only available to wealthy Americans who can pay for it out of pocket, but also to the least among us.

In Connecticut, the cuts to funding will probably mean another round of layoffs in addition to the cuts the program was already forced to make last year. This will again decrease the number of trained staff available to handle calls when citizens who are confused and intimidated by the legal system reach out for help. Millions of dollars in additional cuts will mean that tens of thousands of calls from people seeking advice will go unanswered, and thousands of ongoing cases will remain unresolved.

Mr. Chair, for this reason, and for several others, I have decided that I cannot support this bill in its current form and hope that through negotiations we are able to find some way of rolling back these destructive cuts to a successful, longstanding program that benefits millions of our fellow Americans.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO U.S. ARMY COLONEL CHANDLER C. (SKIP) SHERRELL

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor U.S. Army Colonel Chandler C. (Skip) Sherrell who is retiring after 26 years of service to our nation as an Army Aviation Officer. During his distinguished career, COL Sherrell served the nation in peace and war in

numerous positions of steadily increasing responsibility. COL Sherrell has led soldiers in combat, trained soldiers for war, and served as an advisor and assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), and as a DoD Fellow to the United States Congress. He has served his Nation in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Germany, and Korea, as well as in demanding assignments in the United States. His decorations for his service include awards for valor. He is an outstanding Army aviator, leader, and soldier, and he is deserving of our recognition.

COL Skip Sherrell concluded an outstanding career by serving for two years as the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Aviation & Missile Life Cycle Management Command (AMCOM). He brought a wealth of expertise in aviation operations to the AMCOM Command Group. Prior to joining AMCOM, COL Sherrell performed one of the most demanding and critical assignments of his career, serving as the Commander of Task Force (TF) 49. TF 49 was the Army's designation for a composite Aviation Brigade, formed from many units to perform combat operations in Iraq. In twelve months of intensive flying in multiple locations across Iraq, COL Sherrell led TF 49 to complete mission success with an impressive safety record—an outstanding achievement.

COL Sherrell served in a role that few Army officers experience: working as the Deputy Legislative Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). Serving as a liaison to Congress as the personal representative of the CJCS is an important position, but more importantly, he also served as a soldier's advocate on Capitol Hill for equipment modernization and improved systems and protection.

Therefore Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join me in honoring COL Chandler C. (Skip) Sherrell's exceptional service, dedication and devotion to duty, leadership, and professional competency. He exemplifies the fine tradition of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the Department of the Army, and the United States of America. May he know that his nation is greatly appreciative of his dedication, and wishes him the best in all his future endeavors.

JUANITA WILLIAMS—100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, two years ago I had the privilege to be on the House floor to bring tribute to a wonderful woman, Mrs. Juanita Worsley Williams, to acknowledge and celebrate her 98th birthday. I come again today to honor this lady on her 100th birthday on May 18, 2012.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many older Americans to celebrate, but this lady is special to me because she was with her husband, Dr. Williams, when he delivered me 69 years ago.

My father, the late Congressman Walter Jones, Sr., and my mother were very close with Mrs. Williams and her husband. My sister